

## Message Text

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41

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 ACDA-19 CIAE-00 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 RSC-01 SCI-06 FEAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 PA-04 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 AECE-00 AEC-11

AID-20 CEA-02 CIEP-02 COME-00 EB-11 FPC-01 INT-08

OMB-01 SAM-01 STR-08 TRSE-00 NEA-14 EUR-25 DRC-01

SSO-00 /237 W

----- 087318

P R 111437Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 0219

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

USMISSION IAEA VIENNA

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(DEPARTMENT PLEASE PASS AEC GERMANTOWN UNN)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: IAEA, TECH, SF

SUBJECT: SA ANNOUNCES ATOM BOMB CAPABILITY

1. DR. LOUW ALBERTS, VICE PRESIDENT OF SOUTH AFRICAN ATOMIC ENERGY BOARD (AEB) TOLD PRESS JULY 10 THAT SA NOW HAS NECESSARY SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY TO PRODUCE NUCLEAR BOMB. HE ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT AEB POLICY WAS CONTROLLED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE GOVERNMENT HAD DETERMINED THAT SA'S NUCLEAR KNOWLEDGE WOULD BE USED FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES ONLY, THUS IMPLYING THAT BOMB PROJECT NOT CONTEMPLATED. ALBERTS WAS EXPANDING ON STATEMENT HE HAD MADE EARLIER IN DAY AT INAUGURATION OF SETTLER'S MONUMENT AT GRAHAMSTOWN. APPARENTLY REFERRING TO RECENT NUCLEAR EXPLOSION

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SET OFF BY INDIA, ALBERTS HAD TOLD LISTENERS THAT SA "NUCLEAR

PROGRAM IS MORE ADVANCED THAN THAT OF INDIA".

2. ALBERTS FURTHER NOTED THAT SA HAD ONE QUARTER FREE WORLD'S URANIUM WHICH GAVE SA POWERFUL BARGAINING POSITION IN TERMS OF WORLD ENERGY CRISIS. SA HAD OUTSTANDING TECHNIQUES TO MAKE EXTRACTION ECONOMICALLY FEASIBLE AND AN ENRICHMENT PROCESS FOR RELATIVELY POOR ORE. "WE ARE NOW IN A BARGAINING POSITION EQUAL TO THAT OF ANY ARAB COUNTRY WITH A LOT OF OIL." AFTER STRESSING NEED FOR SECRECY IN ITS RESEARCH, ALBERTS SAID FUTURE OF NUCLEAR POWER ASSURED AND SA WAS IN REMARKABLY STRONG POSITION ON WORLD SCENE, A POSITION WHICH HE WAS SURE SA WOULD UTILIZE WITH MORE WISDOM AND COMPASSION THAN SOME OTHER COUNTRIES IN POSSESSION ENERGY RESOURCES.

3. ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, ALBERTS LATER INSISTED THAT NO MORE SHOULD BE READ INTO HIS GRAHAMSTOWN STATEMENT THAN WHAT HIS WORDS CONVEYED, I.E., THAT SA HAD TECHNOLOGY TO CONSTRUCT ATOMIC BOMB IF NECESSITY SHOULD ARISE. "WE HAVE SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE TO DO IT IF WE WANT TO," HE SAID.

4. ECON COUNSELOR HAS APPOINTMENT WITH HUGO, ALSO A VICE PRESIDENT AEB, AT PELINDABA JULY 18, MADE BEFORE ANNOUNCEMENT, FOR TOUR D'HORIZON AT WHICH TIME WE WILL EXPLORE FURTHER. HOWEVER, WE WOULD NOT BE SURPRISED IF HUGO REPEATED STANDARD SAG LINE ON ITS DEVOTION TO PEACEFUL USES ON WHICH HE EXPATIATED AT SOME LENGTH IN FEBRUARY (PRETORIA 770).

5. COMMENT. IT PERHAPS WORTH NOTING THAT ALBERTS DID NOT ADDRESS HIMSELF TO OBVIOUS QUESTION OF WHETHER SA HAS OR CONTEMPLATES BOMB DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, EXCEPT BY IMPLICATION. WHILE HE ASSERTED BOTH AT GRAHAMSTOWN AND DURING PRESS INTERVIEW THAT GOVERNMENT INTENDED ONLY PEACEFUL USES OF ATOMIC ENERGY, ASSERTION MUST BE CONSIDERED IN VIEW SIMILAR STATEMENTS EXPOUNDED BY OTHERS WHO THEN PROCEEDED JOIN NUCLEAR CLUB. TIMING OF ANNOUNCEMENT ALSO INTERESTING COMING AS IT DOES AT TIME WHEN SOUTHERN AFRICA IN STATE POLITICAL TURMOIL. IN VIEW SAG CONCERN AT PROSPECT OF ESTABLISHMENT POTENTIALLY HOSTILE GOVERNMENTS MOZAMBIQUE AND POSSIBLY EVENTUALLY RHODESIA, IT NOT UNLIKELY THAT ANNOUNCEMENT INTENDED AS WARNING TO THOSE WHO HOPE EXPLOIT NEW SITUATION AGAINST SA.

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HURD

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** TECH  
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**Draft Date:** 11 JUL 1974  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** golinofr  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
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**Subject:** SA ANNOUNCES ATOM BOMB CAPABILITY  
**TAGS:** SF, IAEA  
**To:** SECSTATE WASHDC CAPE TOWN DURBAN JOHANNESBURG IAEA VIENNA  
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